



CITY OF NOVI CITY COUNCIL
APRIL 22, 2024

SUBJECT: Approval to move forward with a Co-Responder Program with Oakland County Mental Health Network (OCHN) and approval to submit a grant through the Department of Justice to support the cost of the Program and to use Opioid Settlement funds to help offset the City's share of the Program.

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT: Public Safety – Police Department

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In 2021, the Oakland County Mental Health Network (OCHN) established a co-responder program to help police agencies enhance their response to mental health related calls. The program was launched with three police agencies: Auburn Hills, Bloomfield Township, and Birmingham. The program has expanded to include 11 police agencies across Oakland County. The OCHN has secured funding through Oakland County Emergency Management and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to fund five additional co-responders in Oakland County. We have been working with OCHN in exploring an opportunity to bring a co-responder to Novi.

The OCHN has reviewed our data concerning mental health related calls and is recommending the Novi Police Department host their own co-responder. Although working out of the Novi Police Department, the co-responder would be an employee of OCHN. The OCHN will use ARPA funds to pay for the position in the first year which will go into effect upon executing a contract with OCHN. The City of Novi would have to commit to funding the position thereafter. The cost of the position including salary, benefits, vehicle stipend, and cell phone is \$115,090.56. The co-responder would remain an employee of OCHN, and the city would reimburse OCHN.

The City of Novi has an opportunity to secure a grant through the Department of Justice to help offset the cost of the co-responder program. The grant, Promoting Access to Crisis Teams – Community Policing is a two-year grant for \$230,181.12. The City of Novi would be required to contribute 25% (\$57,454.28) of the grant and commit to fully funding the program after the grant expires. There is no penalty for not continuing the program after the grant expires. However, not committing to 25% or continuing the program could adversely affect being awarded the grant.

In 2023, the City of Novi began receiving funds from the National Opioid Settlement in the amount of \$63,270. It is projected the City of Novi will continue to receive Opioid Settlement funds of \$10,000, annually for the next 15 years. A local municipality receiving opioid settlement funds can determine how to allocate their disbursements. A co-responder program falls well within the parameters of authorized spending.

		OCHN	City of Novi	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Year One	115,091	115,091	-	115,091
	\$	\$	\$	\$
2025-26	115,091	86,318	28,773	115,091
	\$	\$	\$	\$
2026-27	115,091	86,318	28,773	115,091
Grant Submission	\$ 230,181	\$ 172,636	\$ 57,545	\$ 230,181
		75%	25%	

After year three the City of Novi would be responsible for fully funding the co-responder program at an estimated cost of \$115,090.56. We will continue to seek out grants to help offset the cost.

It is unlikely a contract with OCHN will be in place by the end of the current budget cycle. Given that OCHN will cover the cost for the first year, we anticipate the city would start to encumber the cost during the 2025-26 budget cycle and every year thereafter. While our opioid settlement proceeds will not completely cover the costs of a co-responder, we recommend the city use those funds to help offset the cost of the program as we move forward. Investing in a co-responder program provides a much-needed benefit to our community and public safety team. A co-responder will enhance our public safety services and bring professional assistance to our citizens and our public safety team.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approval to move forward with a Co-Responder Program with Oakland County Mental Health Network (OCHN) and approval to submit a grant through the Department of Justice to support the cost of the Program and to use Opioid Settlement funds to help offset the City's share of the Program.